

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 ACDA-19 PM-07 NSC-10

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PRS-01 USIA-15 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 H-03 OMB-01 EB-11 CU-04

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USCINCEUR

USLOSACLANT

USDOCOSOUTH

XMT ZEN/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

XMT ZEN/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 5579

VIENNA ALSO FOR USDEL MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: CSCE: CBMS - SOVIET POSITION

BEGIN SUMMARY SOVIET AMBASSADOR MENDELEVITCH HAS SET OUT THE SOVIET POSITION ON CBMS WITH FIRMNESS. HE INTERPRETED A SHORT PRIOR NOTIFICATION OF 5 TO 6 DAYS AS LESS DISQUIETING THAN ONE COVERING A LONGER PERIOD, I.E., 60 DAYS, ARGUED FOR APPLYING OBLIGATIONS OF NOTIFICATION TO LIMITED FRONTIER AREAS, THOUGHT ONLY LARGE-SCALE MANEUVERS SHOULD BE NOTIFIED AND OPPOSED TOO MUCH DETAIL IN NOTIFICATION. SOVIET STATEMENT DREW CLEAR LINE BETWEEN SOVIET APPROACH AND DESIRES OF MOST OF OUT NATO ALLIES AND NEUTRALS. END SUMMARY

1. IN 45 MINUTE PRESENTATION IN OPEN SUBCOMMITTEE SESSION,
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SOVIET AMB. MENDELEVITCH FULFILLED HIS EARLIER PROMISE TO AMPLIFY THE SOVIET POSITION ON CBMS. THE NET RESULT WAS A STRIKINGLY LIMITED APPROACH, WHICH DISMAYED SOME DELEGATES IN ITS FRANK EXPOSITION OF SOVIET DISTRUST. MOST ALLIES AND NEUTRALS

HAVE FULLY EXPECTED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD ULTIMATELY DRAW THEIR WAGONS INTO A CIRCLE AGAINST ANY EFFORTS TO EXPAND THE TREATMENT OF THE MILITARY ASPECTS OF SECURITY BEYOND THE ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF MANEUVERS AND THE EXCHANGE OF OBSERVERS. BUT THE PRECISION AND FIRMNESS WITH WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE STAKED OUT THEIR POSITION HAS BEEN SHARP.

2. THE INTERPRETATION INTO VARIOUS LANGUAGES OF MENDELEVITCH'S COMMENTS WAS SUFFICIENTLY VARIED THAT A NATO CAUCUS ON OCT. 17 ANALYZED HIS SPEECH IN AN EFFORT TO CLARIFY SOME OF THE AMBIGUITY. IN A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH AMB. MENDELEVITCH ON THE EVENING OF THE 17TH, AND SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ADD FURTHER CLARIFICATION.

3. MENDELEVITCH BASED THE SOVIET POSITION ON FOUR PREMISE: (A) MEASURES SHOULD BUILD UP CONFIDENCE; (B) MEASURES SHOULD NOT BE SUCH AS TO REDUCE THE DEFENSE CAPACITY OF ANY NATION; (C) THE MEASURES SHOULD NOT CREATE DIFFICULTIES IN THE PREPAREDNESS OF MILITARY UNITS, AND (D) THE MEASURES SHOULD, IN SOME MANNER, BE OF A VOLUNTARY NATURE, INVOLVING PERHAPS A MORAL/POLITICAL OBLIGATION BUT NO LEGAL CHARACTER WHICH COULD EMBRACE SANCTIONS. THE FOLLOWING PARAS REVIEW MENDELEVITCH'S APPLICATION OF THESE PREMISE TO THE SOVIET POSITION ON CBMS.

4. SIZE. IN TACKLING THE DEFINITION OF "MAJOR" IN RELATIONSHIP TO MANEUVERS, MENDELEVITCH DESCRIBED 3 LEVELS OF ACTIVITY IN THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES: TACTICAL, OPERATIVE TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC. (COMMENT: IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION, MENDELEVITCH TOLD US THAT HE RECOGNIZED THE US EMPLOYED ONLY THE TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC CONCEPTS. IN THE SOVIET LEXICON, TACTICAL MEANT UP TO THE DIVISION LEVEL. TACTICAL OPERATIVE INCLUDE CORPS OPERATIONS AND THE STRATEGIC APPLIED TO VERY LARGE MANEUVERS.) MENDELEVITCH DESCRIBED MAJOR MILITARY EXERCISES AS THOSE INVOLVING LAND FORCES, WITH OR WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY AIR FORCE OR NAVAL UNITS, AT THE TACTICAL OPERATIVE OR AT THE STRATEGIC LEVEL. SUCH MANEUVERS NOT ONLY
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COMPRISE SEVERAL DIVISIONS, BUT ARE USUALLY MULTINATIONAL. HE CONTESTED THAT DIVISION-LEVEL EXERCISES COULD CAUSE ALARM, EVEN IF NEAR BORDERS, AND THEREFORE QUESTIONED THE NECESSITY TO NOTIFY THEM. MENDELEVITCH WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT SOME NATIONS MIGHT LIKE INFORMATION ABOUT SMALLER MANEUVERS AND THAT IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO COME TO AGREEMENT ON THE NATURE OF "MAJOR", THEN A BY-PRODUCT MIGHT BE BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS TO COVER MINOR EXERCISES. (COMMENT: OUR ALLIES IN THE NATO CAUCUS BELIEVE THE NEUTRALS MAY JUMP AT THIS AS A WAY OUT. END COMMENT)

5. AREA: INCONTESTING THE NEED TO NOTIFY ALL MANEUVERS, MENDELEVITCH ASSERTED THAT MANEUVERS DISTANT FROM FRONTIERS

WOULD NOT CAUSE ALARM. HE DID NOT OFFER ANY PRECISE DISTANCE BACK BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT BORDER AREAS WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE THAN ONE OR TWO KILOMETERS IN DEPTH. (COMMENT: MANY OF OUR ALLIES INTERPRET THIS PHRASEOLOGY TO CONSTITUTE A REAFFIRMATION OF THE SOVIET INTENTION TO NOTIFY ONLY LARGE-SCALE MANEUVERS IN "SENSITIVE AREAS" NEAR FRONTIERS. END COMMENT)

6. DEADLINE FOR NOTIFICATION: MENDELEVITCH MAINTAINED THAT ALL FOUR PREMISES MUST BE COMBINED. IN THIS CONNECTION, NO ONE CAN PROVE THAT 60 DAYS ADVANCE NOTICE WILL IMPROVE CONFIDENCE ANY MORE THAN 5 DAYS NOTICE. THERE WOULD BE NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE SOVIET UNION IF IT RECEIVED A 60 DAY NOTICE OF OTHER NATIONS' MANEUVERS. MOREOVER, MENDELEVITCH ADDED THAT THERE COULD BE NEGATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTS ASSOCIATED WITH A TWO-MONTH WAIT. RECIPIENTS COULD BECOME NERVOUS, PLANS MIGHT BE CHANGED, AND HE ALLEGED THAT THE NOTICE COULD NOT BE CHANGED. HE THEN WENT ON TO OFFER A LONG EXPLANATION OF THE NEED IN THE SOVIET UNION TO TEST THE READINESS OF TROOPS UNDER ALERT CONDITIONS IN ORDER TO CHECK THEIR MILITARY PREPAREDNESS. PRIOR NOTIFICATION WOULD NOT CONTAIN SUFFICIENT MILITARY KNOWLEDGE NEEDED FOR ANOTHER COUNTRY, BUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A MAJOR MANEUVER IN ONE REGION COULD WEAKEN THE MILITARY SITUATION IN OTHER REGIONS BY LEAVING A GAP IN THE LINE OF DEFENSE WHICH MIGHT BE EXPLOITED. THERE WAS LESS CHANCE OF TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SUCH A SITUATION IF THE NOTIFICATION WAS DONE OVER A SHORTER PERIOD OF TIME.

7. CONTENT OF NOTIFICATION: MENDELEVITCH COMPLAINED THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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AMOUNT OF DETAIL CALLED FOR IN THE NORWEGIAN AND UK PAPERS IS UNJUSTIFIED ON A PRACTICAL BASIS. THE STATES COULD GET BOGGED DOWN IN DETAILS WHICH WOULD HAMPER CHECKING THE MILITARY PREPAREDNESS OF TROOPS. MOREOVER, A DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY WAS DESIRABLE IN THE TRAINING OF TROOPS AND FEW PEOPLE IN THE SOVIET UNION KNOW IN ADVANCE WHICH UNITS MAY COME INTO CONTACT WITH ONE ANOTHER. HE ASSERTED THAT TOO MUCH DETAIL COULD CAUSE DISQUIET.

8. FINALLY, MENDELEVITCH CONCLUDED WITH THE OBSERVATIONS THAT CSCE SHOULD LIMIT ITSELF TO THE MEASURES CONTAINED IN THE FINAL HELSINKI RECOMMENDATIONS, BUT THIS DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THERE MAY BE MEASURES OUTSIDE OF THE HELSINKI MANDATE WHICH WE CAN LOOK AT ON THE BASIS OF EXPERIENCE. BASSIN

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